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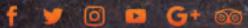



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CHEAP LUNCH ROUND-UP

Grab all the calories you can for your hard-earned cash

BY RACHAEL CARNES

PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

Lunch shouldn't cost an arm and a leg. It's not fancy, and you're probably not trying to impress anyone. You're just hungry. Maybe you're hangry.

You need nourishment! Why pay more than 10 bucks? And why not pay five?

Across town, there are plenty of tasty options for the budget-conscious foodie.

Try **Bing King**, home of the fusion *jian bing*, at 725 Olive St. *Jian bing* is a traditional street food — think of it like a Chinese burrito — with layers of savory meat and delicate veggies, flavored with roasted sesame, toasted nori flakes, green onion and chili, studded with crunchy wanton

crisps or chopped-up Chinese *youtiao*, like a rice flour donut or churro and swaddled in a soft, tender flat bread.

Meat and fried carbs are your friends! My favorite *jian bing* is stuffed with crispy chicken and bacon. I also like the pork belly. You heard me. Add some greens, if you like, or grab a cup of cold fried noodles with Spam. Yes, Spam.

Get over yourself and put it in your face. You will be glad you did. Your very own *jian bing* will set you back about \$6.

If you're in the mood for Oaxacan fare, checkout **El Buen Sabor**, a food truck at 650 Blair Boulevard. Try the *tlayudas*, a large, thin, crunchy tortilla covered with a spread of refried beans, *asiento* (pork lard, yum) lettuce

or cabbage, avocado, meat (I'm into the chicken), oaxacan cheese and salsa. Fried corn masa *memelas* — like a savory pancake of your dreams — make a perfect midday snack and can be topped with a variety of salsas.

El Buen Sabor also features more familiar fare, including mouth-watering quesadillas, nachos and a "Big Burrito" that could shelter a small family. Nothing on the menu tops \$7.

If you're looking for a meal that could be all the calories your body needs for several days, look no further than **Toxic Wings & Fries**. With locations on River Road, West 11th and Valley River Center, they draw in big-time fans for their juicy burgers, crispy fries and bone-in or bone-out chicken wings, featuring a variety of sauces, from mild pesto ranch to "crazy spicy" Toxic Lava. Yes, it is crazy spicy and yes, we warned you. Though your cardiologist advises against it, you can order double or triple meat. The intoxicator burger features *four* meat patties. Good luck with that.

Another go-to in the cheap-but-tasty eats category is **Albee's NY Gyros**, with outposts on West 11th and West 18th avenues and on Willamette Street. This former New Yorker's favorite lunchtime choice is Albee's spanakopita salad — with light and flaky spinach filo dough pies served atop a bed of crunchy greens. Because every salad should feature pie!

Another grab-and-go option is the falafel gyro or Albee's beef-lamb original, served with a variety of toppings for just \$8. (I get the junior for \$6 so I can also justify ordering pie salad.)

And once you've run this veritable cheap food gauntlet and you're in need of something a little lighter, we recommend **Govinda's Vegetarian Buffet**, at 1030 River Road. Since 2007, Govinda's has been offering fresh, healthy salads and soups, a variety of breads (this is gluten-free/fussy diet heaven) as well as simple and delicious hot foods like savory rice, mixed vegetable stir fries and daily curries.

Soul-satisfying and probably good for your karma, Govinda's offers a daily lunch buffet for \$10.95 for all-you-care-to-eat, or an even more economical option for lighter appetites, featuring the same fare at \$5.99 per pound. ■

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UNIQUE EUGENE



Chef Kevin Li

PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER

BAO WOW

New dumpling joint brings bao to Eugene

BY TAYLOR GRIGGS

Kevin Li and his new restaurant Bao Bao House might represent the future of Eugene's culinary scene. Li, who is from Hangzhou, China, has been in the United States for more than 20 years, moving from Michigan to Kansas City to Eugene.

Eugene is quite a bit smaller than Hangzhou, which Li describes as a "medium-sized city, but we still have eight million people." Even so, Li says Eugene is more culinarily sophisticated than some might think.

"Even though we are not a big city, we have a lot of different kinds of good food," Li says. "I wanted to be a part of that."

Bao Bao House, located in downtown Eugene, opened May 28. It has options for soup, noodles, rice and dumplings. The best item is the bao, which is essentially a full meal tied up in an edible bow and served as a dumpling. ■

The bao buns are soft clouds of bread with a little crunch to them, and the flavors inside are fresh but not overwhelming. If you want to be overwhelmed, there are a variety of sauces for dumpling-dipping.

Bao Bao House has pork, curry beef, shrimp and vegetarian bao options, and while the order of six buns is pretty filling, the shrimp fried rice with spicy seafood "XO sauce" is a must-try, too — so fresh and unprocessed, it tastes completely unique and authentic.

The most important aspect of the restaurant for Li to get right was that authenticity and the freshness of the food. "I'm a very classical Chinese man, I like to cook everything in the Chinese way," Li says. "I don't even have a deep-frying machine."

Li says that, while Eugeneans have a variety of restaurants from which to choose, we are lacking when it comes to authentic, non-Americanized Chinese food. "I would really like people to have something different, real Chinese food. That's the reason I opened this restaurant," Li says.

The restaurant has handmade menus, individually drawn and written by Li. "I think this would be the way to show people I do things by my heart," he says.

People have been listening to his heart — the restaurant is No. 1 on Eugene's Yelp ratings right now. Li says customers have been receptive in person, too, and that he tries to utilize all of their suggestions.

With Bao Bao House's success, Li says, we might see more of his restaurants around town. Which, for people who desire authentic and sophisticated food in Eugene, would be a great thing. ■

Bao Bao House is open 11 am to 9 pm every day of the week at 868 W. Park Street. More information can be found at baobaohouseor.com.



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CARNIVORES



REJOICE!

There's a new steakhouse in Town BY WILLIAM KENNEDY

As you enter George + Violet's Steakhouse, you're greeted by a framed quote attributed to Charles Bukowski. "The steak was not just a slice of some poor murdered thing," it reads. "It was something dramatic that fed the body and the soul and the heart."

"We knew we wanted to open a very classic, straightforward American restaurant," says George + Violet's co-owner and general manager, Ross Arce. "We wanted to open something a little more familiar — why not a steakhouse?"

George + Violet's is located in the historic Fry & Rankin building on Main Street in Springfield, centered nicely in the city's resurgent downtown restaurant scene.

Arce has partnered in the business with Katie Francisco and her husband Chef Andrew Francisco. Chef Francisco attended the Culinary Institute of America and trained under Thomas Keller.

"We shared a very similar dream," Arce explains, adding that the business partners looked around at all the wonderful produce and grass-fed beef the Northwest has to offer, and wondered, "Why isn't anyone doing a steakhouse?"

I'm served a 12-ounce ribeye, a baked potato and a grilled albacore tuna appetizer, prepared with green tea, barley oil and shiso, an annual herb with a bright, citrusy flavor. For dessert, I go with a fig leaf Anglaise with hazelnut milk and a blackberry granita.

It's all heavenly — the albacore tuna appetizer a symphony of Asian inspired simplicity and the blackberry granita an icy delight.

The ribeye is perfectly fatty, medium-rare and cooked to perfection. Along with the steak comes a choice of two butters: blue cheese, hazelnut miso butter or Dungeness crab butter.

The butter pairings bring out fascinating dimensions in the beef, so when the scandalous red meat juices mix in your mouth with the blue cheese butter, your eyes roll back in your head just a bit.

"We lay our menu out in a very simple, easy classic way," Arce says. "We let the food really speak for itself.



Chef Andrew Francisco,
Katie Francisco
and Ross Arce

But then you get it and you realize there's so much more going on."

He's right. While there's plenty of inventiveness at George + Violet's — a garden salad with nasturtiums, bachelor button mushrooms and a shiso vinaigrette, for example — there's nothing fussy or overwrought in the experience.

The restaurant is located in the former Jim's Landing, described by Arce as a tough logger bar. George + Violet's upgraded the windowless interior to a dimly lit, fine dining-lite take on Northwest casual, but ghosts of the old Jim's

Landing still hang intriguingly in the air.

"We want to be welcoming to everyone," Arce says. He explains that his restaurant is appropriate for special occasions, but also a burger and beer after work.

As you leave George + Violet's, with the taste of blood still on your tongue, you finish reading Bukowski's quote: "At that moment, death didn't matter."

And at that moment, it was true. ■

George + Violet's Steakhouse is open 5 to 10 pm Tuesday to Thursday, 5 pm to midnight Friday and Saturday and 5 pm to 9 pm Sunday at 305 Main Street in Springfield. For more information see georgevioletsteakhouse.com.

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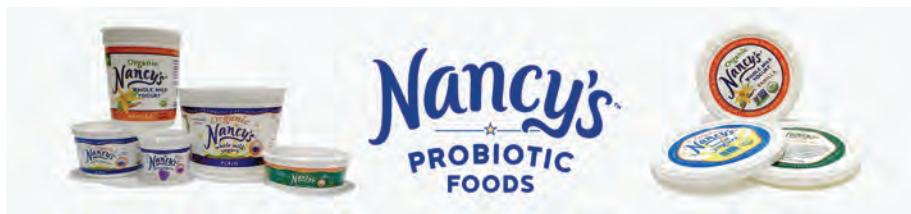
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TOLLY'S IS BACK

An old favorite returns to Oakland, Oregon

BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

North of Roseburg and a good 45 minutes south of Eugene, across a single lane bridge and down Locust Street, is Tolly's, a longtime Oakland, Oregon, staple that's come back to life.

I remember going to Tolly's back in the late '90s and sitting in a wingback chair in an upstairs dining room of a restaurant full of antiques and carousel horses. The Tollefson family sold it not long after, in 2001.

Opened in 1968 by Terry and Carol Tollefson, Tolly's isn't just a restaurant — it's a soda fountain, a candy store and a beloved anchor for Oakland, population about 900 or so.

Back in April of this year, Paul Tollefson, the son of the original owners, found himself on a trip down memory lane when his friend Rob Gandy posted a picture of a "for sale" ad on Paul's Facebook page, proposing — in jest — they split the cost. A thread ensued of memories and enthusiasm. On May 19, Tollefson responded "done."

Two months later, Tollefson was gearing up for a September opening.

After selling Tolly's in '01, the Tollefsons bought it back in 2003, and sold it again 2008. Another Oakland family, the Knights, bought it in 2013 in order to keep the mainstay going, even keeping the name. Not a restaurant family, Tolly's came up for sale in 2016 after the elderly Don Knight died and has sat empty ever since.

Now Tolly's is back. Tollefson says another old friend who grew up in Oakland, Rhett Woods, offered to go in with him on the restaurant as a kind of silent partner. Woods was one of the many Oaklanders who worked at Tolly's in his youth and got his start after Terry and Carol Tollefson sent him to community college. Paul Tollefson says, and that mission of employing local families and giving back to the community is something he's also bringing back.

The restaurant will stay a family affair. While Terry Tollefson passed away in June, Paul says that Carol Tollefson has been involved in Tolly's restoration and will be at the restaurant a couple days a week. Paul will be commuting from Tahoe where he has a mortgage business and Mill Valley where his wife, Abbey Tollefson, has a business and where they live with their three daughters.

In addition to outdoor seating, the area behind the restaurant is developing raised beds where Tollefson plans to engage local schoolchildren in the slow food movement and use what is grown at Tolly's.

The menu features old favorites many of them named for Oakland families like the Mode's Reuben and Creighton B. sandwich as well as more contemporary vegan and vegetarian offerings. Tollefson says that the food is locally sourced as much as possible, including a local ribeye steak, the cap of which is cured and featured on a charcuterie plate.

Tollefson is also working on live entertainment several nights a week where live bands will play on an outdoor deck, mainly folk and Americana, he says.

Tollefson says those old wingback chairs I remember from years ago are worn out, but he's ordered 50 more and his mother has ordered cases full of candy for the old-fashioned soda fountain downstairs. He's had the kitchen redone, the carpets cleaned and he's restored the charm that once made Tolly's a go-to destination not only for locals, but for travelers along I-5. ■

Tolly's is located at 115 NE Locust Street, Oakland, Oregon. More at facebook.com/TollysInOakland. Hours TBA.

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CHURCH OF BEER

Former church still serves as a gathering place and welcomes all taste buds **BY MICHAEL TOBIN**

PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

Springfield is in a restaurant Renaissance, and a former church is the latest installment to the city's thriving food scene. PublicHouse, which was formerly Springfield's First Christian Church, still maintains the character of the original building, with parallels going on inside.

"This has always been a public house and it's lent itself to the name," says PublicHouse co-owner Patric Campbell. "We get a lot of patrons now who are sending us photos of their parents' wedding. This building has a lot of history."

The church was built in the 1930s and served as a gathering place for worshipers for almost 80 years. Where the pastor used to give parishioners communion wine is now a beer hall, where Campbell and co-owner Colby Phillips have 38 taps featuring local, regional, national and international beers.

"It's communion everyday," Phillips laughs. "We thought about that when we put the bar up here, that parallel was definitely there."

Campbell and Phillips knew each other before PublicHouse. The two have been family friends for years, played basketball together and even brewed beer when they came of age, a hobby the two say they stopped when local breweries started to fill up kegs.

These days, "we're gonna leave that up to the professionals," Campbell laughs.

Their venture is in the business of serving drinks. PublicHouse also features an outside bar and is quickly expanding with a whiskey lab that Campbell and Phillips say will open soon.

Even with the all the taps, Campbell and Phillips recognize the importance of creating a family-friendly atmosphere and have options for everyone, including kombucha and craft sodas.

The "options for everyone" mantra doesn't limit itself to beverages — PublicHouse currently has four individual vendors — La Granada, 100 Mile Bakery, Cascade BBQ

and Pig & Turnip — selling food ranging from barbecue to baked goods and Bavarian classics like schnitzel sandwiches.

Campbell and Phillips say the vendors put craft and care into their products. "One of the advantages is that they're individually owned and there's the pride of ownership with each spot," Phillips says. "As opposed to one restaurant being managed by somebody, this is all these individual owners taking a lot of pride."

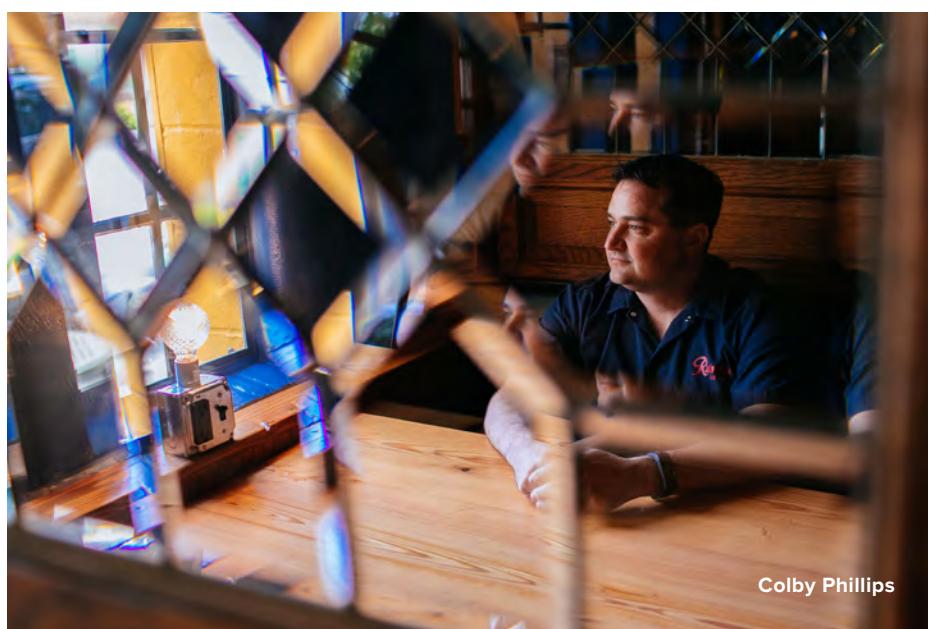
As with the outside of building, Phillips says the atmosphere and food offered by PublicHouse is meant to reflect authenticity.

"It's really about trying to give the patron an authentic experience," Phillips says. "A place they can gather with friends, have a great meal, have a good craft beer or a good whiskey and really just have that good experience where they want to come back." ■

PublicHouse is at 418 A Street in Springfield and open Monday-Sunday 11am to 10 pm. 541-246-8511, publichousehub.com.



PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA



Colby Phillips

PHOTO BY TODD COOPER



PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

NEW PUB ON THE BLOCK

Claim 52 Kitchen offers a unique menu of pub food and beer BY TAYLOR PERSE

Strolling down Willamette Street downtown, it's difficult to miss Claim 52 Kitchen with its open garage-style doors, patio seating out front, and black and white retro sign hanging above the entrance.

The owners, Mercy McDonald and Jeannine Parisi, opened their distinct pub-style restaurant in April, after operating Claim 52 Brewery in south Eugene for the last six years.

McDonald, a former police officer, is the frontrunner for the restaurant, although she hasn't always dreamed of this position. After 16 years, she had been looking for a way to leave the force when a friend gave her the idea of opening up the brewery.

"I figured if I could be a police officer, I could do anything," she says.

For the restaurant, Parisi — who is also a community and government liaison for EWEB — and McDonald wanted to try alternative food to typical pub food. From honey glazed chicken, to Thai chili green beans, to battered spiral fries with turmeric salt, there are many options that are comforting and healthy, including salads and sandwiches.

"We wanted to have a little bit of a niche for us that was different compared to other local pub menus," Parisi says. She adds that their tacos are probably the most popular item on the menu, although people have their favorites.

For the first time since opening up the brewery, Claim 52 Kitchen is able to have all its beers on tap at one time. McDonald says they are trying to keep as much variety as possible.

"At the core of our beer, we want it to be high quality and flavorful," McDonald says.

When McDonald and Parisi chose to develop craft beers, they faced the challenge of distinguishing themselves among the many beer options in the community. They solved the problem by crafting hazy IPAs, a cloudy colored beer with more citrusy flavors.

"It was really the hazy IPAs that gave us a little edge on the market and allowed us to, you know, break out a little bit," McDonald says.

Claim 52 Kitchen presents beer uniquely by offering beer floats on the menu. Much like a regular root beer float, the customer chooses a kind of beer and adds ice cream. Although, Parisi says, some beers work better than depending on the flavor. For example, they serve a blueberry milkshake IPA with coconut.

"We do things that are innovative, but also approachable, so people can enjoy them and enjoy the flavors, but it isn't weird for the sake of being weird," she says. ■

Claim 52 Kitchen is at 1203 Willamette Street #140. Open 11 am to 8 pm Sunday and Monday and from 11 am to 11 pm Tuesday through Saturday, claim52brewing.com

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Drinks for Two

Early Dinner 4 pm - 5:30 pm
With this coupon, Expires September 30th